
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the CEQA Guidelines and the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance. Placer County is the lead agency for the environmental review of the Martis Valley Community Plan Update (proposed project) evaluated herein and has the principal responsibility for approving the project. This DEIR assesses the expected environmental impacts resulting from adoption of the proposed Martis Valley Community Plan and associated impacts from subsequent development under the Plan. The Draft EIR identifies feasible means of minimizing potential adverse environmental impacts.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

Placer County (County), acting as the lead agency, has prepared this Draft EIR to provide the public and responsible trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Martis Valley Community Plan Update. As described in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public informational document that assesses potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. Public agencies are charged with the duty to consider and minimize environmental impacts of proposed development where feasible, and an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

CEQA requires the preparation of an environmental impact report prior to approving any project, which may have a significant effect on the environment. For the purposes of CEQA, the term "project" refers to the whole of an action, which has the potential for resulting in a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378[a]). With respect to the Martis Valley Community Plan Update, the County has determined that the proposed plan is a "project" within the definition of CEQA.

1.2 KNOWN RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

"Responsible Agency" means a public agency that proposes to carry out or approve a project, for which a Lead Agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purpose of CEQA, the term "Responsible Agency" includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency that have discretionary approval power over the project or an aspect of the project. The following agencies are identified as potential Responsible Agencies:

- Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District
- Caltrans
- Placer County Water Agency
- Truckee-Donner Public Utility District
- Northstar Community Services District
- Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency
- Truckee Sanitation District
- Pacific Bell
- Truckee Fire Protection District

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- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District
- California Department of Fish and Game (also designated as a "Trustee Agency")
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1.3 TYPE OF DOCUMENT

The CEQA Guidelines identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Program EIRs are defined by the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168) as:

A program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either:

- (1) *Geographically,*
- (2) *A logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,*
- (3) *In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or*
- (4) *As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.*

This EIR will be used to evaluate subsequent projects under the Martis Valley Community Plan. Additional environmental review under CEQA would be required and would be generally based on the subsequent project's consistency with the Community Plan and the analysis in this EIR, as required under CEQA and the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance.

1.4 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of the project to the greatest extent possible. This EIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with the project. Subsequent actions that may be associated with the project are identified in Section 3.0 (Project Description) of this document.

1.5 RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The County adopted the Placer County General Plan (General Plan) in 1994. The General Plan is the County's overall guide for the physical use of the County's resources, expresses the development goals of the community, and is the foundation upon which all land use decisions are made.

The Placer County General Plan currently defers land use designations and area-specific policies to the existing Martis Valley General Plan (1975). The proposed Martis Valley Community Plan would update the existing Martis Valley General Plan as well as modify the land use diagram for the plan area.

The General Plan EIR analyzed the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the General Plan. Where feasible, the County has adopted mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a level of insignificance. In addition, significant and unavoidable impacts identified in the General Plan EIR were addressed by the County in the General Plan EIR, and the County adopted findings and a statement of overriding considerations to allow those impacts.

1.6 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE

Sections 15122 through 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines and Section 18.20.030 of the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance identify the content requirements for Draft and Final EIRs. An EIR must include a summary, description of the project and the environmental setting, an environmental impact analysis, mitigation measures, alternatives, significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The environmental issues addressed in the Draft EIR were established through review of environmental documentation developed for the site, environmental documentation for nearby projects, and public agency responses to the Notice of Preparation.

Sections 4.1 through 4.12 in this EIR provide an integrated presentation of the setting, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures. Potential effects of implementing the proposed project are identified; including cumulative effects, along with mitigation measures recommended to lessen or reduce identified impacts. In cases where all available and feasible mitigation will not reduce the impacts to less than significant, this fact is noted. This EIR provides an analysis of environmental effects specifically associated with the proposed project, as well as an evaluation of project impacts in light of the environmental analysis provided in the County General Plan EIR.

This Draft EIR is organized in the following manner:

SECTION 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

Section 1.0 provides an introduction and overview describing the intended use of the EIR and the review and certification process.

SECTION 2.0 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed project and provides a concise summary matrix of the project's environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures for each land use map option.

SECTION 3.0 - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including intended objectives, background information, and physical and technical characteristics.

SECTION 4.0 - ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Section 4.0 contains an analysis of environmental topic areas as identified below. Each subsection contains a description of the existing setting of the project area, identifies project-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures. The environmental analysis evaluates each of the Proposed Land Use Diagram (PP) and the three land use map alternatives (Existing Martis Valley General Plan Land Use Map-AA, Alternative 1 Land Use Map-AB and Alternative 2 Land Use Map-AC).

This section also includes an introduction to the environmental analysis that describes the general assumptions used to evaluate project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts. However, specific analyses are provided in each environmental issue area section.

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The following major environmental topics are addressed in this section:

Land Use: Addresses the land use impacts associated with implementation of the Plan including project compatibility with surrounding land uses, consistency with County land use policies and provisions, analysis of land use patterns, potential land use conflicts, and impacts to adjacent uses.

Population, Housing and Employment: Examines the impacts of the Plan on local population characteristics, and examines impacts on housing stock and employment.

Human Health/Risk of Upset: Assess the likelihood for the presence of hazardous materials or conditions in the plan area and the potential for impacts on human health.

Transportation and Circulation: Addresses the impacts on the local and regional road system. In addition, the section assesses impacts on transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

Noise: Examines noise impacts during construction and at project buildout, as related to potential noise generation from mobile and stationary sources. This section also addresses the impact of noise generation on neighboring land uses as well as potential conflicts with Truckee-Tahoe Airport.

Air Quality: Discusses local and regional air quality impacts associated with Plan implementation.

Hydrology and Water Quality: Examines the impacts of the Plan on area hydrological conditions, including drainage areas, groundwater, and changes in drainage flow rates.

Geology and Soils: Addresses the potential impacts the Plan may have on soils, soil suitability for development, and seismic hazards for proposed development.

Biological Resources: The Plan's impacts on habitat, vegetation, and wildlife are addressed, while emphasizing the potential degradation or elimination of important habitat, and the impacts on listed, proposed, and candidate threatened and endangered species.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources: Addresses the potential impacts on historic, archeological and paleontological resources within the plan area.

Public Services: Discusses the impacts the Plan will have on public services and the need for additional public services.

Visual Resources/Light and Glare: This section assesses aesthetic impacts of Plan implementation.

SECTION 5.0 - CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY

This section discusses the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project. As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, an EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.

SECTION 6.0 - ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROJECT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and avoid and/or lessen

the environmental effects of the project. This alternatives analysis provides a comparative analysis between the project and the selected alternatives. This includes a summary of the impact analysis between the Proposed Land Use Diagram (PP) and the three land use map alternatives (Existing Martis Valley General Plan Land Use Map-AA, Alternative 1 Land Use Map-AB and Alternative 2 Land Use Map-AC). In addition to these land use map alternative the EIR qualitatively evaluates the following other land use alternatives, which include:

- **No Project Alternative:** CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires that a "no project" alternative be evaluated in an EIR. Under this alternative, the project would not be approved and the current Martis Valley General Plan (1975) would remain.
- **Clustered Land Use Alternative:** This alternative would involve clustering land use densities as shown in **Figure 6.0-1** in order to provide compact development in the plan area and minimize the amount of land disturbance.
- **Reduced Intensity Alternative:** This alternative would consist of the modification of the Proposed Land Use Diagram that would minimize significant impacts identified in the analysis provided in Section 4.0.

SECTION 7.0 - LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

This section contains discussions and analysis of various topical issues mandated by CEQA. These include significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented, significant irreversible environmental changes and growth-inducing impacts.

SECTION 8.0 – DRAFT MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

Pursuant to Article 18.28 of the Placer County Environmental Review Ordinance, a draft of the mitigation monitoring and reporting program for the Plan is provided in this section.

SECTION 9.0 - REPORT PREPARERS

This section lists all authors and agencies that assisted in the preparation of the report by name, title, and company or agency affiliation.

APPENDICES

This section includes all notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the EIR, as well as all technical material prepared to support the analysis.

1.7 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The review and certification process for the EIR will involve the following general procedural steps:

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR for the project on July 11, 2001. The County was identified as the Lead Agency for the proposed project. This notice was circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed project. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR. The NOP and responses by interested parties are presented in **Appendix 1.0**. Also, an Initial Study for the project was prepared and released for public review along with the NOP. Its conclusions supported preparation of an EIR for the project. The Initial Study is included in **Appendix 1.0**.

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DRAFT EIR

This document constitutes the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives. Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the County will file the Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161).

PUBLIC NOTICE/PUBLIC REVIEW

Concurrent with the NOC, the County will provide public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review, and invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. The public review and comment period should be no less than thirty (30) days. Public comment on the Draft EIR will be accepted both in written form and orally at public hearings. Although no public hearings to accept comments on the EIR are required by CEQA, the County expects to hold a public comment meeting during the review period prior to EIR certification. Notice of the time and location of the hearing will be published prior to the hearing. All comments or questions regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Lori Lawrence
Placer County Planning Department
11414 B Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS/FINAL EIR

Following the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared. The Final EIR will respond to written comments received during the public review period and to oral comments made at any public hearing.

CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR/PROJECT CONSIDERATION

The County will review and consider the Final EIR. If the County finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete", the County will certify the Final EIR. Upon review and consideration of the Final EIR, the Placer County Board of Supervisors may take action to approve, revise, or reject the project. A decision to approve the project would be accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and, if applicable, Section 15093. A Mitigation Monitoring Program, as described below, would also be adopted for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed upon the project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment. This Mitigation Monitoring Program will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during project implementation.

MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires lead agencies to adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The draft mitigation monitoring and reporting program for the project is provided in Section 8.0 of this document.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE EIR

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, the scope of this Draft EIR includes specific issues and concerns identified as potentially significant physical effects on the environment. Based on both the Initial Study and the NOP comments, this EIR addresses the following topics in depth:

Environmental issue areas identified for study in this EIR include:

- Land Use
- Population, Employment and Housing
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Transportation and Circulation
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Paleontological Resources
- Public Services and Utilities
- Visual Resources
- Growth Inducement

The complete text of the NOP is contained in **Appendix 1.0**.

Placer County determined that the preparation of an EIR was appropriate due to potentially significant environmental impacts that could be caused by implementing the proposed Martis Valley Community Plan Update. This Draft EIR evaluates the existing environmental resources in the vicinity of the plan area, analyzes potential impacts on those resources due to the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures that could avoid or reduce the magnitude of those impacts. This EIR will be used to evaluate the direct and indirect environmental effects of subsequent development under the Community Plan (e.g., residential subdivisions, rezones, commercial structures, park sites, recreation facility development, infrastructure improvements).

1.9 COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The County received several comment letters on the Notice of Preparation for the Martis Valley Community Plan Update DEIR. A copy of each letter is provided in **Appendix 1.0** of this DEIR. The County received letters from the following federal, state and local agencies and interested parties.

- State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Truckee Fire Protection District
- Native American Heritage Commission
- State of California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
- Placer County Water Agency
- Town of Truckee
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Janette Schue, Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP

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- Sandberg & LoDuca
- Sean Dowall
- Jack Carrier
- Carolyn Allfree
- Carol and Duff Kurland
- W.E. Cowan/Meeera Beser
- Bradley Harlan
- Ron Jacobs
- David Landis
- David & Linda Brown
- Kathryn & David Welch
- Pam Scrutton Morrison
- League to Save Lake Tahoe
- Tim Polishook
- Jack Nixon
- George Sublett
- Adda Quinn
- Donald & Mary Lou Copper
- Janice Conover
- Peter Castro
- Marya Roddis
- Mary & Stan Bennett
- Placer County Agency Formation Commission
- Nevada County Transportation Commission
- Tahoe Truckee Unified School District

The following summarizes the concerns in these letters.

- Traffic impacts to Interstate 80, State Route 267 and 28 need to be considered.
- Drainage impacts to state highway facilities need to be considered.
- Visual impacts from views along state highways.
- Fire protection services in Martis Valley are considered sufficient by Truckee Fire Protection District.
- Sufficient water supplies are available for the Community Plan as identified by Placer County Water Agency.
- Traffic impacts within Plan area and the Town of Truckee need to be addressed.

- Air quality impacts from construction and operation activities in the Plan area
- Cumulative water supply impacts need to be addressed as part of EIR.
- Affordable housing demands and the environmental effects of increased affordable housing demand needs to be addressed.
- Trail connections between the Town of Truckee and Martis Valley should be considered.
- An adequate alternative analysis needs to be provided in the EIR.
- The EIR needs to address sewage disposal issues.
- The environmental analysis needs to address impacts to sensitive plant and animal species in the area.
- The EIR needs to address water quality issues associated with construction and operational impacts of development in Martis Valley. This includes consideration of impacts to wetland areas and groundwater resource and quality impacts.
- The Community Plan and EIR should be coordinated with other regional planning efforts.
- The EIR needs to address cumulative impacts of proposed development projects in the area.
- A scoping document for the Draft EIR that includes thresholds of significance should be prepared prior to release of the Draft EIR.
- The EIR should contain a geographic description of the extent of the environmental analysis of project and cumulative impacts.
- The EIR should contain a detailed project description that describes anticipated levels of disturbance, description of anticipated development and development projects in the area, description of natural and man-made features in the Plan area and a description of existing land use plans in the area.
- The alternatives analysis should identify alternatives that avoid environmental impacts by reducing density, clustering development, transferring development rights to the Town of Truckee and the provision of alternative policies and programs.
- The land use analysis should address changes in allowed land uses and densities, an evaluation of changes in land use policies from the existing Martis Valley General Plan and other regulations, and identify adequate mitigation measures for identified impacts.
- The EIR must address growth-inducing effects of the Community Plan.
- The geology analysis needs to address soil erosion impacts, topographic changes and grading.
- The biological resources analysis should be based on detailed field surveys at the appropriate times of the year and must address consistency issues with regulatory programs. The analysis needs to address impacts to biological resources and must include consideration of the impacts of the recent Martis Peak fire.
- The EIR needs to address all potential direct and indirect impacts to water resources from the project. This includes surface water quality impacts and increased groundwater usage.
- The noise section should consider all potential noise impacts from construction, operational sources and the Truckee-Tahoe Airport.
- The EIR must address Community Plan impacts from increased demands for public services and utilities.

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- The visual resources analysis needs to address the change in the character of the Plan area from implementation of the Community Plan and should consider the use of visual simulations.
- The EIR needs to consider Sierra Pacific's proposed rezone request (Martis Ranch) in the cumulative analysis.
- Concerns expressed regarding future development of the Northstar-at-Tahoe resort area.
- The EIR cumulative impact analysis needs to consider land use and development activities of the Town of Truckee and Nevada County.
- Development concerns associate with the desire of keeping existing land use conditions as is.
- The EIR needs to address air quality impacts to the Tahoe Basin.
- General traffic, public service and quality of life concerns associated with proposed build-out scenarios under the Community Plan.
- The Community Plan should be a joint effort between Placer County, Nevada County, the Town of Truckee and area residents.
- Consideration of limiting development to what can be accommodated with the existing 2-lane configuration of State Route 267.
- The EIR needs to address impacts to cultural resources.
- The EIR needs to address public health impacts.
- The traffic analysis needs to carefully consider peak conditions, trip generation rates, ski resort expansion at Northstar, permanent residency, and peer review of the traffic consultant's work.
- The Community Plan should be completed prior to consideration of individual development projects proposed in Martis Valley.
- The EIR needs to consider impacts from all development, including ski resort development and golf course development.
- The EIR must address compatibility issues with the Truckee-Tahoe Airport.